

The width of cut for the pattern depends on the type of crop and the amount of detail in the maze. You should cut a path wide enough to allow visitors to walk along it, but narrow enough to keep a thick border of crop material around the pattern. Paths 4 to 6 feet wide are ideal, and you should try to keep 8 to 12 feet of standing crop between paths where possible. The thickness of crop between paths is important: if the crop stand is too thin, visitors will see other paths and may be tempted to create “shortcuts.” Also, if visibility from the air is desired, the swath should be wide enough to stand out boldly against the rest of the field (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Finished maze, the North Carolina State University “Strutting Wolf.”

SUMMARY

Creating a crop maze requires careful planning and design. A farmer wishing to make one should choose a pattern that fits the shape of the field and select a crop that lends itself well to a maze. DGPS receivers capable of accuracy to 1 meter or less are useful tools for laying out a maze in a field. Once the design is created in a GIS software package, the DGPS receiver can be used to guide a GPS operator along the pattern to be marked in the field. Markers can then be set along the perimeter

of each shape or pattern to provide a guide for cutting. Cutting the maze with a mower is the final step in creating the pattern.

When complete, a maze will provide a focal point for a farm. Visitors may be attracted, and another source of revenue may be created. The maze also will offer an eye-catching image from the air and may bring the farm fame outside the region.

PREPARED BY
GARY T. ROBERSON, EXTENSION SPECIALIST
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL AND AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING

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